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ABSTRACT

Three groups of teacher education graduates--current teachers, former teachers, and those who never taught--were asked to rate the effectiveness of their training, i.e., knowledge base. Significant differences in several domains were found across these three groups as well as for elementary majors and secondary minors within the groups. Domains showing differences were: content knowledge, general and content pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational goals and values, and knowledge of educational context. Implications for program evaluation and modification are discussed. Copies of the quetionnaires are appended. (JD)

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Perceptions of the Knowledge Base by Three Groups of Teacher Education Graduates

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Abstract: Three groups of teacher education graduates, i.e. current teachers, former teachers, and those who never taught, were asked to rate the effectiveness of their training, i.e. knowledge base, relative to their teaching experience. Significant differences in several domains including content knowledge, general and content pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational goals and values, and knowledge of educational contexts were found across these three groups as well as for elementary majors and secondary minors within groups. Implications for program evaluation and modification are discussed.

In this study three groups of teacher education program graduates--current teachers, former teachers, and those who never taught[1]--were asked to assess the effectiveness of the knowledge base components of the program. The data suggest that these groups perceive differences in the relative effectiveness of some components of the particular program being assessed. Differences were also found between elementary education majors and secondary minors for both current and former teachers. Additionally, some of the reported deficiencies are similar to those reported by beginning teachers as contributing to the "reality shock" of teaching fulltime.

What constitutes the knowledge base for teaching is a subject of much debate and interest (NCATE, 1986; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 1987; and Valli and Tom, 1988). NCATE, and other teacher education reform programs/proposals, places strong emphasis on ensuring that graduates of teacher preparation programs are well-versed in this knowledge base. Shulman (1986) cites the need to differentiate between the content of this knowledge and the variety of forms that it can take. He notes that the knowledge base can be represented in three different ways, e.g. as propositional knowledge through principles, maxims, and norms, as case knowledge though prototypes, precedents, and parables, and as strategic pedagogical knowledge. Valli

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[1]These students completed a student teaching experience as part of the teacher education program but chose not to pursue teaching fulltime after graduation. They were asked to respond to the questionnaire items based upon their student teaching experience only.

and Tom (1988) define the content of the knowledge base rather broadly as "the entire repetoire of skills, information, attitudes, etc., that teachers need to carry out their classroom responsibilities." pg. 5. They state that the knowledge base framework must meet an "adequacy criteria." The five characteristics of this criteria are that the knowledge base must,

1. be derived from all relevant scholarly traditions,
2. present competing views of teaching and schooling,
3. be able to show relationships between technical and normative aspects of teaching,
4. be useful and accessible to practitioners, and
5. encourage reflective practice. pg. 6.

Shulman (1987) sees the knowledge base as divided into several domains. These include content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, learner knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational goals and values.

With the recent revision of the NCATE standards for accreditation (1986) many teacher education programs are faced with addressing Precondition #4 that states,

> The unit keeps abreast of emerging techniques and regularly monitors and evaluates, both internally and externally, its operations, scope, quality of its offerings, and effectiveness of its graduates. pg.8

This precondition is further described to include soliciting feedback on the performance of program graduates from their immediate supervisors as well as asking the graduates to assess the effectiveness of particular components of the program.

There are a variety of evaluation/assessment models for addressing this precondition. Ayers (1988), drawing on the work of Medley, Cohen, and Soar (1984), proposes that evaluation should follow a quasi-industrial quality control model wherein the goals and objectives of specific programs are quantitatively evaluated. Ayers

(1988) suggests a performance-base evaluation of the program graduates using specific teaching tasks, gathering a quantifiable record of performance, quantifying/scoring the record, and comparing the score to a predetermined standard. Medley (1988) proposes an evaluation matrix that matches elements in the knowledge base (i.e. performance skills, professional knowledge, professional values, and perceptual skills) with contextual elements (i.e. preactive, interactive, postactive, and extra-active). Both Medley (1988) and Ayers (1988) note that this process is expensive, time-consuming, and relatively difficult to develop. Given these difficulties, Ayers (1988) notes that a questionnaire approach to gathering data is the most common, though not the most enlightening. Raths (1988) also acknowledges this dilemma for adequately evaluating a program via questionnaire but offers three suggestions for soliciting feedback from graduates. First, items should provide the program with information that can be acted upon (moving from general ideas to specific courses). Second, questions should avoid "perferences" for program elements infavor of "presence and usefulness" of these elements. Third, questionnaires can be used to gather self-report data on classroom performance.

Sample and Method

Recent graduates (1983 - 1988) from a teacher education program that educates students from both a small liberal arts oriented college and a comprehensive research university were sent a set of questionnaires[2] as part of the NCATE accreditation process. Students from the former institution participate in either the elementary

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[2]A complete set of questionnaires is included at the end of this paper.

education major or secondary education minor program, while students from the latter institution participate only in the secondary minor program. The questionnaires included a series of program goal statements that coincided with Shulman's (1987) division of teacher knowledge into seven domains, i.e. content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, learner knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational goals and values[3]. Students chose the appropriate form depending whether they were current teachers, former teachers, or had never taught. They responded to each program goal statement using a five-point Likert scale from Very Effective (1) to Very Ineffective (5) based upon their teaching experiences. Current and former teachers were asked to rate the strengths/weaknesses of particular components of the teacher education program relative to the performance of their peer teachers. Graduates were asked other questions that were specific to their current status, e.g. where and what grades do (did) you teach and what were your reasons for choosing to leave teaching (to not teach). Only the results for the Likert scale items and ratings of program strengths/weaknesses will be presented in this paper.

Results

One hundred and seventy-eight (62%) of the teacher education program graduates responded to the questionnaires. Elementary education majors and secondary minors responded in approximately equal proportions to the number

[3] A group of faculty and recent graduates were asked to match Shulman's (1987) seven domains to the goal statements in the questionnaire. The process was repeated until consensus was reached.

graduated (113 of 187 elementary education majors, 65 of 99 secondary minors). Of the 178 graduates returning completed questionnaires, 113 (63.5%; 78 elementary and 35 secondary) identified themselves as current teachers, 31 (17.4%; 20 elementary and 11 secondary) as former teachers, and 34 (19.1%; 15 elementary and 19 secondary) as never teaching.

Because of the small samples for the former and never teacher groups and the strongly positive evaluation of program goals by both groups, the expected frequencies for several cells of a 3 X 5 Chi-Square analysis of graduate type by questionnaire item response were less than five. Therefore, respondent item ratings of 3 through 5 were collapsed into a single category. Three items in the 3 X 3 Chi-Square analyses (4 degrees of freedom) demonstrated significant differences among the three groups of graduates. Questions that corresponded to Shulman's (1987) teacher knowledge domains of content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge/

Tables 1 and 2 about here

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pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of educational contexts (propositional) produced significant differences among the three groups of graduates. A series of 2 X 3 Chi-Square analyses **(see Table 2)** comparing all possible pairings of the three groups of graduates was done to further refine the sources of these differences. Current and former teachers differed significantly in their perception of content knowledge effectiveness, with current teachers indicating that their content preparation was highly effective. Significant differences for each of the three comparisons (current vs. former; current vs. never; and former vs. never) were found for perceptions about

the effectiveness of general pedagogical knowledge/pedagogical content knowledge. Current teachers indicated that their pedagogical training was highly effective. Former teachers rated this area as only effective while those who never taught rated it only moderately effective to ineffective. Finally, current teachers and those who never taught reported different perceptions in the domain of knowledge of educational contexts (propositional). Those who never taught perceived their preparation in this area to be significantly less effective than current teachers.

The three graduate groups (current, former, and never teachers) differed in their preparations as either elementary education majors or secondary education minors. A 2 X 3 Chi-Square analysis (2 degrees of freedom) of graduate group by program type revealed a Chi-Square value of 7.012 ($p < 0.05$). While current and former teachers were representive of the entire sample, i.e. approximately 65% elementary majors and 35% secondary minors for each group, those who identified themselves as never teaching were approximately 45% elementary majors and 55% secondary minors.

Other differences between elementary majors and secondary minors were found within the current and former teacher groups. Among the current

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Tables 3 and 4 about here

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teachers secondary minors perceived the content knowledge and general pedagogical strategies/pedagogical content knowledge domains to be less effective than was reported by elementary majors. Among former teachers secondary minors perceived knowledge of educational goals and values and knowledge of educational contexts (case) to be less effective than elementary education majors. There were no

significant differences between the perceptions of elementary majors and secondary minors on program goals for those who never taught.

Current and former teachers were asked to rate the general effectiveness of the program based upon a comparison with their perceptions about their peer teachers.**(See Table 4)** Current teachers who were elementary education majors rated the program strongly positive (75%), whereas a large majority of secondary education minors (78%) indicated that the program needed strengthening. No differences were found on these items for the group of former teachers; however, both elementary majors and secondary minors for this group were less positive about the strength of the program than the current teachers.

Discussion

The graduates generally rated the program goals as very effective preparation for their careers as teachers. There were, however, differences among the three groups in their perceptions about the relative effectiveness of these program goals. Compared with the other two groups, current teachers viewed the goals as being confirmed in their experiences as a teacher. These graduates credited their preparation in these areas as key to coping with the "reality shock" phenomena noted by Marso and Pigge (1987) and Veenman (1984). While current teachers rated the program goals to be more effective than the other groups, there were differences between those prepared as elementary majors and secondary minors. Secondary minors reported that their education to be somewhat less effective in content preparation and pedagogical knowledge. Written comments from these graduates indicate that they desired a slightly different content preparation than their college

major provided them. For example, several English teachers indicated that their college major did not provide sufficient background in teaching grammar and writing. All content preparation for secondary minors is completed outside of the education program in the students' major department. Secondary minors also noted a deficit in their preparation to teach their particular subject. Currently this particular program requires only a one credit content methods course. Under the new NCATE guidelines this course will undergo significant substantive changes and be increased to three credits. The finding that secondary minors rate particular components of the teacher preparation program to be less effective than elementary majors is paralleled by Marso and Pigge's (1987) report that secondary teachers report greater "reality shock" than elementary teachers.

Former teachers in this study are perhaps the result of this "reality shock" becoming too great. Former teachers rate their content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to be somewhat less effective than current teachers. While there were few specific written comments that shed light on the former[4], these former teachers repeatedly cited classroom management and student motivation issues as reasons for leaving the profession[5]. Current teachers, when asked in what areas did the teacher education program need to improve, also indicated these areas. Veenmen (1984) reports that classroom management is by far the most common concern of beginning

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[4] Most comments were rather cryptic or indicated they should have "studied harder" in some areas.

[5] Interestingly, on a separate question that asked "Why did you leave teaching?" the most frequently checked answer was "poor pay." This response is more understandable given that nearly 80% of the former teachers taught in either Catholic or other private schools.

teachers, as well as the most commonly observed problem of this group by supervisors. To address this problem, in addition to increased coverage of the topic throughout the teacher preparation program, a special mini-course (one credit) that focuses solely on classroom management will be provided just prior to student teaching for all students.

Differences in preparation (elementary vs. secondary) also evidenced themselves for the former teacher group. Secondary minors hold different perceptions of the effectiveness of preparation in the areas of knowledge of educational goals and values and knowledge of educational contexts (case) compared with elementary majors. The latter perhaps is a function of the amount of time spent observing and participating in a teaching situations prior to both student teaching and full time teaching. Elementary education majors participate in several courses that secondary minors usually do not take that require the former to spend significant amounts of time in educational settings. Perhaps with the renewed insistence that all students accumulate at least 100 hours in educational field experiences prior to student teaching this problem will resolve itself. The difference between the elementary majors and secondary minors in their perceived effectiveness of the knowledge of educational goals and values is quite another problem. The lack of unanimity suggests that secondary minors did not accept some basic educational assumptions in general or some goals and values particular to the specific program. These philosophical differences may ultimately contribute to their leaving the profession.

Those who never taught, i.e. those who only completed student teaching but had never taught fulltime, are in some ways similar to the group of former secondary school teachers. As a group, program graduates who never taught perceive their

preparation in pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of educational contexts (propositional) to be less effective than their peers. Their written comments suggest that they view the ineffectiveness to be more conceptual/theoretical rather than technical/mechanical. For example, a former teacher would write that she felt inadequately prepared to try to teach a group of students who could be divided into four different reading levels while a person who never taught would argue against the idea of ability grouping as a method of instruction because it may negatively influence student self-concept. Those who never taught also commented on their dissatisfaction with other contextual and/or societal issues related to teaching. Many of the secondary minors reported that they participated in the program as a hedge incase they couldn't get a better paying job in their major field. Like the secondary minors who were former teachers, those who never taught did not seem to accept some of the basic assumptions about the educational process.

This study suggests that when one evaluates the effectiveness of preparation in the knowledge base by soliciting feedback from recent graduates several different perceptions are reported. Those graduates who currently teach generally view their preparation as effective with the exception of some minor fine-tuning in particular areas of the knowledge base. Former teachers provide more extreme examples of where significant changes rather than mere fine tuning needs to be made. Different perceptions seem also related to program preparation (elementary vs. secondary) for both the current and former teacher groups. Those graduates who never taught fulltime report conceptually different perceptions about the program goals than the other two groups. Each of these groups, therefore, provides distinctly different answers to the question "Was your preparation in the knowledge base effective?" To exclude

any one of these groups from the analysis of program graduates may create an unwarrented halo effect on the achievements of the program. While most teacher education program evaluation methodologies cited by Gephart and Ayers (1989) opt for assessing only current teachers, useful information about program effectiveness can be gained by gathering data about graduates who are former teachers as well as those who never taught.

Table 1

Chi-Square Comparisons of Current, Former, and Never Teachers on Program Goal Questionnaire Items

Item[6]	Chi-Square (df = 4)	Significance
1. Knowledge of Educational Goals and Values	5.448	NS
2. Content Knowledge	10.309	$p < 0.05$
3. General Pedagogical Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge	14.404	$p < 0.01$
4. Learner Knowledge	6.183	NS
5. Knowledge of Educational Contexts (Propositional)	7.589	$p < 0.10$
6. Knowledge of Educational Contexts (Case)	1.711	NS

Table 2

Chi-Square Comparisons of Current vs. Former, Current vs. Never, and Former vs. Never Teachers on Selected Program Goal Items

Item	Chi-Square (df = 2)		
	Current vs. Former	Current vs. Never	Former vs. Never
2. Content Knowledge	8.813***	2.300	3.138
3. General Pedagogical Knowledge Pedagogical Content Knowledge	8.802***	4.794*	12.115****
5. Knowledge of Educational Contexts (Propositional)	2.255	6.894**	1.237

* $p < 0.10$ *** $p < 0.025$
** $p < 0.05$ **** $p < 0.01$

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[6] Shulman (1987) domain description used instead of actual questionnaire item.

Table 3

Chi-Square Comparison of Elementary Majors vs. Secondary Minors for Current and Former Teachers on Program Goal Items

Item[7]	Chi-Square (df = 2)	
	Current	Former
1. Knowledge of Educational Goals and Values	1.740	5.829*
2. Content Knowledge	5.471*	0.033
3. General Pedagogical Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge	8.044***	0.022
4. Learner Knowledge	3.083	3.880
5. Knowledge of Educational Contexts (Propositional)	2.571	0.524
6. Knowledge of Educational Contexts (Case)	1.704	7.492***

Table 4

Chi-Square Comparison of Elementary Majors vs. Secondary Minors for Current and Former Teachers on Program Strengths/Weaknesses

Item	Chi-Square (df = 1)	
	Current	Former
1. Do you see any components of our program as being particularly strong....	5.387***	0.940
2. Are there any components of our program that need strengthening....	4.576**	0.502

* $p < 0.10$
** $p < 0.05$
*** $p < 0.025$

[7] Same as #3.

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SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana
EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATES--CURRENT TEACHERS

Name of School:_____ Subject/Grade Level Taught:_____ Dates of Employment_____

Considering the following goals of the teacher education program at Saint Mary's College, please indicate how successful the program was in meeting these goals.

	No Opinion	Highly Effective				Ineffective
1. General liberal education background sufficient to help you to be a well-rounded person, able to enrich your life and your teaching.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sound preparation in subject-matter area(s) to be taught.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teaching principles and techniques sufficient to help you in setting objectives, planning lessons, selecting and using various methods and materials, and evaluating achievement of objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Psychological foundations sufficient to enable you to understand pupils as learners and adjust instruction to address individual differences.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sufficient background in social and philosophical issues to understand the role of the school and teacher in society, to relate your values to the teaching situation, and to assume a professional role.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sufficient practical experience in observing, working with, and teaching in classroom situations to provide a basic foundation for assuming responsibility for a classroom.	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. Do you see any components of our program as being particularly strong compared to the background of others with whom you have taught?
   a. Yes b. No If "Yes", please comment here or on back.

8. Based on your experiences in teaching, are there any components of our program that you believe need strengthening (or elimination)?
   a. Yes b. No If "Yes", please comment here or on back.

Signature Date

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana
EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATES--FORMER TEACHERS

Name of School:_____ Subject/Grade Level Taught:_____ Dates of Employment_____

Considering the following goals of the teacher education program at Saint Mary's College, please indicate how successful the program was in meeting these goals.

	No Opinion	Highly Effective				Ineffective
1. General liberal education background sufficient to help you to be a well-rounded person, able to enrich your life and your teaching.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sound preparation in subject-matter area(s) to be taught.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teaching principles and techniques sufficient to help you in setting objectives, planning lessons, selecting and using various methods and materials, and evaluating achievement of objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Psychological foundations sufficient to enable you to understand pupils as learners and adjust instruction to address individual differences.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sufficient background in social and philosophical issues to understand the role of the school and teacher in society, to relate your values to the teaching situation, and to assume a professional role.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sufficient practical experience in observing, working with, and teaching in classroom situations to provide a basic foundation for assuming responsibility for a classroom.	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. Do you see any components of our program as being particularly strong compared to the background of others with whom you have taught?
   a. Yes b. No If "Yes", please comment on back.

8. Based on your experiences in teaching, are there any components of our program that you believe need strengthening (or elimination)?
   a. Yes b. No If "Yes", please comment on back.

9. Reason(s) for leaving teaching: (Circle as many as apply)
   a. Married/family responsibilities
   b. Non-discipline work problems
   c. Discipline problems
   d. Poor pay
   e. Pursuing graduate study
   f. Pursuing other work
   g. Other_____

Signature Date

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana
EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADUATES--NEVER EMPLOYED AS TEACHER

Considering the following goals of the teacher education program at Saint Mary's College, please indicate how successful the program was in meeting these goals.

	No Opinion	Highly Effective				Ineffective
1. General liberal education background sufficient to help you to be a well-rounded person, able to enrich your life.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sound preparation in subject-matter area.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Principles and techniques sufficient to help you set objectives, plan projects, select and use various strategies to achieve objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Psychological foundations sufficient to enable you to understand other people and to adjust your responses to address individual differences.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sufficient background in social and philosophical issues to relate your values to your life situation.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sufficient practical experience in observing, working with, and teaching in classroom situations to provide a basic understanding of the classroom situation.	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. Reason(s) for not teaching: (Circle as many as apply)
   a. Family resonsibilities
   b. Did not enjoy student teaching
   c. Felt inadequately prepared
   d. In graduate school
   e. Salaries are too low
   f. Could not find teaching position
   g. Pursuing other career interests
   h. Other_____

8. Based on your student teaching experience, what were the major strengths of the teacher education program? (Please be specific; use back)

9. Based on your student teaching experience, what were the major weaknesses of the teacher education program? (Please be specific; use back)

_____
Signature Date

IF EMPLOYED OUTSIDE THE HOME:
NAME OF EMPLOYER_____ NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT_____ DATES OF EMPLOYMENT_____

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana
EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS/SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Name of Teacher:_____ Grade or Subject Taught:_____ Dates Taught:_____

Competencies & Characteristics to be developed in teacher education program.	No Oppor. to observe	Program appears: Strong				Weak
1. Identify appropriate objectives and provide varied approaches for pupils differing in ability, motivation, and knowledge.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Demonstrate depth and breadth of subject-matter knowledge in presentations and projects.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Maintain control of classroom and set reasonable standards of behavior; encourage self-discipline or group discipline.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Develop rapport with pupils, stimulates discussions, relates to each as a person, gives help according to need.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Use media/instructional technology, manipulatives, and other resource materials and equipment to aid learning, as appropriate.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Cooperate with supervisor, other teachers and parents in projects for improving the learning environment.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Show professionalism in conduct: i.e. being prepared for classes, keeping abreast of professional developments, maintaining confidence concerning pupil learning problems, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5

8. On what basis did you make this evaluation? (Circle as many as are pertinent)
   a. Personal observation in the classroom
   b. Reports from supervisor
   c. Informal reports from other teachers
   d. Informal reports from pupils
   e. Informal reports by parents
   f. Discussion with the teacher
   g. Other_____

Please add any comments which would be helpful in evaluating the teacher education program on the other side of this questionnaire.

Signature Title Date

School name and address

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE, Notre Dame, Indiana
EVALUATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Name of Employee:_____ Nature of Employment:_____ Dates of Employment_____

Competencies & Characteristics to be developed in teacher education program.	No Oppor. to observe	Program appears: Strong				Weak
1. Identify appropriate objectives and utilizes varied approaches for completing projects in the workplace.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge in presentations and projects.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Demonstrate organizational skills and self-discipline.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Develop rapport with colleagues, stimulates discussions, relates to each as a person, gives help according to need.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Use media/instructional technology, manipulatives, and other resource materials and equipment to aid in completing projects.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Cooperate with supervisor and other professionals in job-related projects.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Show professionalism in conduct: e.g. keeping abreast of professional developments, quality and timeliness of completed projects.	0	1	2	3	4	5

8. On what basis did you make this evaluation? (Circle as many as are pertinent)

a. Personal observation in the workplace
b. Informal reports from colleagues
c. Reports from supervisors
d. Other_____

Please add any comments which would be helpful in evaluating the teacher education program on the other side of this questionnaire.

Signature Title Date

Company name and address